Reading Toolkit: Grade 7 Objective 3.A.6.d

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 6. Analyze important ideas and messages in literary texts

Objective d. Reflect on and explain personal connections to the text

Assessment Limits:

Connections between personal experiences and the theme or main ideas

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Lesson Seeds
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Activities

After reading a literary text, students will discuss its characters with the teacher. During the discussion the teacher should model making a connection with a character. For example the teacher would state that he/she knows how a particular character feels when a certain event occurs because of a like situation the teacher had experienced. Once the thought processes have been modeled students should be encouraged to make their own connections patterning their responses on the model.

Have students read or read to them a literary text like <u>Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day</u> by Judith Viorst. After reading is complete, students should be asked to relate their very bad days as Alexander did thereby connecting with the character. Teacher Note: While intended for younger audiences, this text holds much appeal for older students as well.

Students should read a piece of realistic fiction. After reading is complete and a brief discussion of its major points has been conducted, the teacher should provide students with a series of real-life situations most of which should be represented in the text. An example follows.

Real-life situation	Text connection	Self connection
Child disobeys parents		
Individual assists another in need		
Individual wins award or recognition		
Individual overcomes a challenge		

Working in small groups, students should determine an example of the situation in the text and those in the group to whom a self connection to the situation is possible should record that connection. Group members should share their information with other members of the class.

After reading a literary text, students will organize their thoughts about that text using a 3-2-1 pattern. This activity can be completed by the entire class, small groups, or individuals. First, students should record three important ideas or events that occurred within the text. Next, students should list the names of two memorable characters, and finally, students should record one personal connection they were able to make with a character, event, or idea in the text. Students should share their information with others in the classroom or group.

Clarification

Reading Grade 7 Indicator 3.A.6

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in a literary text which are the important ideas and messages. Sometimes these points are stated directly in the text. For other more complex texts, a reader must determine an implied, important idea or message by synthesizing ideas across the text.

To identify, explain, and analyze main ideas and universal themes, a reader must first identify the main idea of a text or a portion of a text. In order to do this, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text. To determine what an author of a literary text has to say about the topic, a reader must attend to details that relate to or clarify the topic. This combination of topic and details forms the main idea. The main idea may be directly stated or implied and may appear in any portion of a text.

While a main idea is text-centered, a theme is author-centered. A story's theme is an author's message about a topic. To identify a theme of a literary text, a reader must first find broader important concepts in a text such as family, prejudice, courage, or love. A reader must observe carefully what characters say and do that relates to the theme topic. A theme is a combination of a "big" idea and what is said about that idea. A theme is a recurring idea in a text, but it also moves outside the text and applies to people in general, not just the characters in the story.

In more complex texts, theme can arise not only from character statements and actions but also from emotional and societal issues experienced by characters. These issues can be observed in changes in characters' values or beliefs, symbols, repeated words, or imagery. Readers can bring different interpretations to a text based upon their personal experiences. If evidence from a text can be provided to support a reader's suggestion about theme, then it is valid.

To identify, explain, and analyze a similar idea or theme in more than one text, a reader must first identify an idea or theme in each literary text. Once ideas or theme statements for each text are established, comparison between or among the texts can begin.

A reader may focus on similar ideas contained in multiple texts. A reader may focus on morals or lessons learned by characters contained in multiple texts. For younger readers, multicultural renderings of the same fairy tale are common. The conclusions drawn from similar texts are text-specific and based on many supporting details from each text.

A reader may focus on common experiences, emotions, issues, and ideas as sources for theme topic and statements in texts. The best conclusions drawn about theme across multiple texts are text specific, based on many supporting details from all texts. As comparisons among text themes continue, each theme must be analyzed carefully. Not only should the theme statement be considered but also how the author relayed the theme to the reader. For example, in one text, the strongest source for theme may have been character action, while in another text, the strongest source for theme may have been imagery. However, both texts may have similar themes that have been developed in different ways.

To retell, paraphrase, or summarize a text, a reader must first read and know the basic narrative elements of a text: the setting, character, and story events. When retelling, a reader must share the story in his/her own words, keeping story events in order.

Paraphrasing allows a reader to take a more complex text and make it understood by placing difficult ideas into simpler language. When a reader can tell a story in words that make sense to him/her, that reader is paraphrasing. As lengths of stories increase, multiple characters appear, and changes in setting occur within a text, paraphrasing increases in complexity.

When a reader can distinguish between necessary and unnecessary ideas and recount only the important ideas in his/her own words, he/she is summarizing. When summarizing, a critical reader paraphrases the important text. As texts grow in complexity, summarizing allows a reader to focus on the essential elements of a literary passage.

To reflect on, identify, and explain personal connections to the text, a reader must consider all elements of a literary text: setting, character, story events, mood, tone, and theme. Next, a reader must consider his/her personal experiences and relate them to one or more elements of a text. A reader might consider himself/herself or a friend or family member to be like a character from a text. A reader might discover that his/her attitude toward a particular subject mirrors an author's tone toward the same subject. A reader might hold the same belief revealed in a theme statement or find himself/herself in direct opposition to the idea in a theme. Once this connection is established, a critical reader is able to define how this connection is made and to construct meaning from a text, citing both text and personal details.

To explain the implications of the text for the reader and/or society, a reader must first consider ideas from a text that involve the reader in a personal way. A source for such ideas could be the events that befall certain characters, unfamiliar settings, the author's tone toward certain subjects, or thematic development of the text. A critical reader should define the literary element and then explain the level of involvement with that element and the effect it has had upon the reader's thinking. For example, a reader who has always been ambivalent about preserving the forests might alter his/her opinion after reading a text where forest preservation is promoted through theme. Through the explanation, the reader clarifies his/her own thought processing and makes his/her position clear to others.